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ABSTRACT

This document comprises a report on the architectural elements of choice in the desegregation process, a review of the choice process based on Minnesota's experience, and a statement of implications for state policymakers. The following organizational principles of the choice process are discussed: (1) enrollment based on a "first come, first served" versus a "deadline" approach; (2) enrollment based on targeted attendance areas versus city-wide enrollment; (3) enrollment based on entrance grade versus all-grade enrollment; (4) student transportation; (5) single enrollment choice versus multiple enrollment choices; (6) sequence of choice opportunities; (7) enrollment priority systems; and (8) enrollment capping. Major reasons why contemporary school desegregation planning uses the choice process and magnet schools are described as: (1) effectiveness; (2) stability; (3) educational improvement; and (4) choice. Criticisms of the choice process and magnet schools are listed: (1) elitism; (2) skimming; and (3) disproportionate burden of responsibility. The following issues needing policy attention are discussed: (1) dissemination of information about the program; (2) ability of an individual school district to prevent students from transferring into the district; (3) lack of transportation; (4) economic disincentives; (5) restriction on intra-district transfers; (6) racial balance outcomes; (7) effect on interscholastic athletics; (8) school district reorganization; (9) precursor of a voucher system; and (10) inclusion of private schools. Lists of 25 footnotes and 22 references are appended. (FMW)

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CHOICE AND DESEGREGATION

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Abstract

Choice has become the new educational polemic. The architectural elements of choice in the desegregation process are extensively discussed in this paper with the problems, as well as the virtues, of this technique exposed. The paper concludes with a review of Minnesota's experience with choice and comments on implications for state policymakers.

In a recent survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Information (NCEI), it was revealed that 51% of school board presidents nation-wide opposed granting parents and students public school choice. Only 36% of the school board presidents supported the idea, with 13% indicating no opinion. In a 1987 survey of superintendents and principals also conducted by NCEI, 68% of the superintendents and 60% of the principals opposed public school choice. By contrast, the 1987 Gallup Poll on education revealed 71% of the adults and 76% of parents of public school children indicating that they ought to have the right to choose among public schools[1].

The same issue of Education Week featured an article citing the controversy over the recently adopted plan of the Boston School Committee for a controlled choice approach to substitute for its existing desegregation plan. The article described the strong black opposition to the plan against views supporting the plan espoused by Michael Alves, its author, and many others, who believe that the controlled choice process will meet Constitutional muster, and, at the same time, will promote program improvement in the Boston public schools.

The survey results in combination with the recent controversy in Boston point out the politics of public school choice. The Bush administration's strong advocacy of public school choice has made choice a polemic; that is, something you are either for or against, and which is sufficiently described by the use of the single word. In fact, choice means many different things in different settings and part of the difficulty in dealing with this issue is sorting out the particular version of school choice that is the target of admiration or criticism. To some, the word choice evokes the memory of resistance by southern school districts to desegregation. In the ten years following the 1954 Brown decision, "freedom of choice" plans were proposed by many southern districts. These plans were de-

signed to avoid the consequence and requirement of school desegregation. As choice in the desegregation process was revisited in the mid-1970s, it was done so from the vantage point of the possibility of using choice to contribute to racial balance, rather than avoid it. Consequently, the term "controlled choice" came into use as a way of distinguishing the choice process from "freedom of choice" as it existed in earlier desegregation history.

It is also important to distinguish choice as a process from schools of choice. The choice process is one that can exist in any environment, including ones where choices are made among schools that are cookie-cutter impressions of one another[2]. The choice process can, and in a number of cases has, provoked the creation of increased numbers of schools of choice; but one does not necessarily follow the other. It is also the case that very innovative schools can exist apart from the opportunity to choose these schools. In other words, these schools exist in traditional attendance areas with attendance area students and parents having exclusive access to them. Despite the popularity of schools of choice, they remain rare opportunities among the nation's public schools . Mary Anne Raywid has suggested three possible reasons for the limited adoption of schools of choice by public officials[3]. She believes that the adoption of a large number of schools of choice requires a structural change by school systems. In other words, a limited number of magnet or alternative programs do not threaten the basic structure and design of a school district. By contrast, when a school district makes a major commitment to schools of choice, it necessitates the restructuring of the district and its values in ways that Raywid believes most districts are unprepared to do.

The second idea expressed by Raywid is tied to the perennial notion held by educators that there is one best form of schooling. Despite lip-service paid to the importance of different modalities of instruction and different forms of schooling meeting different pupil needs, Raywid suggests that at the heart of most educators' viewpoint can be found the notion of a single best school or program for

all students. Therefore, the adoption of many alternative programs flies in the face of this one best notion approach. Finally, Raywid suggests that there is, in fact, an inherent problem with the documentation of the success of schools of choice. Many educators simply don't have any personal or indirect knowledge base to draw upon in terms of the potential benefits of schools of choice. Consequently, their spread is more glacial than volcanic.

My own experience with school choice is as the term applies to techniques employed in school desegregation, either on an urban or metropolitan basis. In 1976, when the Milwaukee Public Schools came under federal court order to desegregate, I headed a team which looked at various known techniques of desegregation. They were all based on various kinds of mandatory reassignments of students. It struck us at the time that our limited use of choice in the Milwaukee Public Schools might adumbrate another kind of technique for student reassignment that relied heavily on the choices parents made for their students, rather than the choices the school system made for students. So, while the Milwaukee desegregation plan has come to be recognized for the extensive use it made of magnet programs, in reality, Milwaukee was not the first to use magnet programs, but it was the first district to develop a controlled choice program for the desegregation of an entire urban school district. In 1977, all parents were required to make a school choice in Milwaukee. Approximately 108,000 choice requests were processed for Milwaukee's 150 schools. Since there was little history anywhere else in the country to rely on, we made no predictions on outcomes but clearly understood that the process, one way or another, would render a student assignment for every child. Our goal was to maximize the number of times that the school system could say yes to a parent request for a school - and, of course, do this within racial balance guidelines and within the capacities of individual schools. To both our surprise and pleasure, we were able to grant 95% of the first choices parents made for schools. Of the remaining students, the vast majority of those students were "mandatorily" assigned to their neighborhood schools. That is, there was when the

process was completed enough capacity in neighborhood schools to accommodate those parents whose requested choices could not be satisfied. The choice process, in combination with schools of choice (specialty schools) in Milwaukee established a major new and important technique for meeting contemporary desegregation challenges. To date, most of the desegregation plans being formulated and adopted either voluntarily or, more commonly, through the court-ordered process are various forms of controlled choice programs[4] .

It was in Milwaukee that I had responsibility for both the design and the implementation of the Milwaukee desegregation program. Additionally, I worked with legislators in 1976 to adopt a voluntary inter-district transfer plan that has become a model used in other parts of the country considering metropolitan desegregation solutions. Since the mid-1970s, I have had the opportunity to work in many urban school districts on their desegregation approaches and have testified as an expert witness in six major desegregation cases. So, obviously, the form of choice with which I am most familiar, is the controlled choice format used in the desegregation process, and the schools of choice with which I am most familiar are magnet programs.

The first part of this paper, "Organizing Principles of the Choice Process," is a review of the "building blocks" used in designing a choice program. The "Issues" section that follows is an analysis of some of the values in the use of these building blocks. In the conclusion section, I come back generally to the topic of choice and suggest directions for public school choice as a matter of state policy.

Organizing Principles of the Choice Process[5]

Just as there are many variations on the magnet school theme, there are also many combinations and permutations of the choice process. How a desegregation architect chooses to design the enrollment process is also a strong reflection of both values and science. Just as

many program decisions for magnet schools may have been made without reference to the underlying principles, it is also apparent that enrollment designs in many cases reflect lack of attention to the range of possibilities and consequences. Some of the most important issues of racial equity and desegregation effectiveness relate to the choice process.

1. First Come, First Served Versus Deadline Approach

The most important decision regarding a magnet school enrollment process is a choice between enrolling students on a first come, first served basis or on a deadline basis. As the name denotes, first come, first served enrollment approach gives first enrollment preference to the individual who has either stood in line or in some other way placed his or her application at the top of the list. When this is done on a personal registration basis, it frequently results in long lines of parents standing out in front of schools, sometimes for many hours, and in a few cases days, in order to enroll their child in a popular program. In other cases where applications are considered, lines of individuals processing their applications at a central point are considered on a first come, first served basis; or when applications are mailed to a central point, the first ones opened by those receiving the mail are given consideration above others.

By contrast, the deadline methodology allows individuals to apply over a period of time with the only requirement being that all applications be turned in by a certain time. Sometime after the deadline, they are processed with equal consideration given to each application, regardless of when it was received over the application period.

Those who advocate the first come, first served basis point to the very positive effect on the magnet school program as a whole created by the long lines of waiting parents. Often these lines become parts of news stories emphasizing the quality of the magnet programs and the number of people who are willing to sacrifice their time and energies in order to enroll in them. It is argued that this

publicity has a highlighting effect upon the entire magnet school program, stimulating interest in enrollment in other sites.

Those who prefer the deadline approach usually argue on behalf of the basic fairness of the approach. It serves the interests and needs not only of those who are willing and able to make the sacrifice of time, but also of those who cannot act on their interest in the program by speedy action or long hours of waiting. Also, those who advocate the deadline approach point out that, not only is it in reality a fairer process, but also it affords a special opportunity for revealing publicly the fairness of the process. By that, I mean that the deadline approach is often coupled with a public determination of who will be allowed to enroll in programs that are oversubscribed. This is frequently done in an auditorium with a computerized random number generator, in the presence of public and press. The first come, first served method does not allow for this possibility. Usually at this public event not only are the students chosen for the program, but also the balance of the applicants are put on a waiting list.

While both approaches have their strong advocates, I believe it is difficult to defend the first come, first served approach on the basic issue of fairness. There are simply those who will have inside information allowing them to get in an early application or who will have the time to sacrifice in a long waiting line. The basic and fundamental question is, why should these individuals be favored over those who have an equal desire for their child to be in the program but not an equal access to information or ability to wait in line?

2. Attendance Area Versus City-Wide Enrollment

Some desegregation architects choose to give preference to the attendance area population in the enrollment in the new magnet program. In other cases, it is decided that enrollment will be available on a city-wide basis without special preference to attendance area populations. There are innumerable variations on this theme, including a phase-out preference system for attendance

area populations, as well as the maintenance of an attendance area preference with the requirement that all, including the attendance area population, reapply for the school. The decision on enrollment preference is driven by the values one holds on behalf of the traditional attendance area or neighborhood school concept versus the values associated with giving all in the city an equal opportunity of enrollment. Also a factor in the decision may well be the cost associated with transportation. Obviously, the attendance area preference limits the amount of transportation and, hence the cost.

3. Entrance Grade Versus All-Grade Enrollment

Some program designs by their nature require enrollment on a developmental basis. For example, in a Spanish language immersion program a student would not be allowed to begin the program at the third grade level because the other children in the class would have had three years of previous experience in the Spanish language of instruction. Therefore, the primary enrollment is into the entrance grades, and enrollment in higher level grades is not possible -- except for the unusual case of a child with previous, similar experience in another setting.

Other magnet programs are implemented for all grade levels simultaneously and later fill vacancies at all grade levels. When programs are run without grade level targets, the capacity of a total school may be absorbed by taking additional students only at the entrance grade level rather than filling vacancies at higher grades. In many cases, the available spaces at other than the entrance grade are filled before the enrollment period by taking applicants off of waiting lists, limiting new applicants to the entrance grade. Another consideration in determining what grade levels will be open is the length of benefit. By this, I mean that a student taken in at a lower grade level will have a larger benefit from the program than a student taken in at a higher grade level.

4. Transportation Versus Restricted Transportation

The extent and form of transportation offered to parents will have a significant effect on the school enrollment. At the first level, a decision is made whether or not to provide transportation by the school district. In most cases, the decision is usually in favor of providing transportation under rules of eligibility having to do with distance and hazard. Sometimes factors that include improving the racial balance enter into transportation considerations. However, even after the transportation decision is made in favor of the school system's providing transportation support, the type of transportation afforded will have an effect on enrollment. Some districts choose to provide yellow bus transportation, public transit passes, parent contracts, taxi service, or a combination of all of the above. Yellow bus transportation is the conveyance of choice for most parents. Parents' perceptions of convenience and safety are strong factors in the decision to enroll in a particular program requiring transportation.

The type of transportation provided is often related to costs. Public transportation, when it is available, is usually less expensive than yellow bus transportation. Also, magnet school plans usually require more costly transportation networks than do mandatory reassignment plans. However, any true assessment of transportation should include not only cost comparisons, but also benefit comparisons. In this way, transportation is evaluated as an investment in the success of the desegregation plan.

5. One Enrollment Choice Versus Multiple Enrollment Choices

In designing the enrollment process, the architect is faced with a decision on whether to afford one choice for enrollment purposes or hold out multiple choice opportunities. The important thing to note from the outset is that whatever the form of initial enrollment communication (that is, whether you begin with a process of offering one choice or a process that offers multiple opportunities for parents to list their enrollment choices in priority order), only one

choice can be considered at a time. This fundamental point is often lost both on those who are involved in desegregation architecture, as well as on the parent or court trying to respond to a choice enrollment process. It is not unusual, for example, to see the parent fill out a choice form that has three blanks with the same school name, thinking that somehow that will improve their chances for getting their child enrolled in their school of choice. The differences between the single choice and multiple choice processes are more apparent than real. That is, since only one choice can be considered at a time, the most important determination for the parent or guardian is a first choice. If, then, that first choice is granted, the information on the additional choices is irrelevant. Moreover, if the vast percentages of individuals get their first choice in school enrollment, then the remainder, whose first choices cannot be satisfied, can be contacted personally regarding the available openings and their other choices. The multiple choice form usually results in the processing of a second choice automatically when a first choice cannot be granted. If the school assignment is made on the basis of that second, third or fourth choice, it is done so without a real knowledge of the depth and extent of interest in the choice. It is not unheard of for parents and guardians to substantially change their minds between the time they apply for a set of magnet school programs and the notification of enrollment. Under circumstances where you are able to grant a very high percentage of parent/guardian first choices for their student's enrollment, it may be preferable to contact the parent individually regarding the balance of the choices before any unwarranted assumptions are made with regard to other choices that parents listed under a multiple choice opportunity.

Sometimes restrictions are placed on the choices parents may make. These choices may be limited geographically or by virtue of the race of the student. It is not uncommon to see systems that deny applications from students whose transfer from a school would have a deleterious effect on the racial balance of the sending school. This is an unnecessary restriction at the application stage because a de-

cision on the application can always be made at a later time. Moreover, an individual transfer that may "violate" a transfer rule might be allowed when the full effects of all transfers are taken into consideration. This tendency to restrict, a priori, certain types of applications is one of the most frequent errors made in desegregation planning.

6. Choice Sequence

When the opportunity for school enrollment is extended by the school system, it may be done in such a manner that parents are forced to jeopardize their child's enrollment in their neighborhood school in order to risk an application to a magnet school. Under a system where all choices are available during a single time period, parents and guardians are often faced with perplexing choices, not only among attractive programs (which I argue is a healthy embarrassment of riches) but also between attendance area and magnet schools. In this situation, the parent is asked to risk a first choice enrollment into a magnet program and lose the priority opportunity they have for enrollment into their attendance area school. What can happen is that a parent is unsuccessful in getting the magnet school choice, while at the same time their attendance area school is also filled by other first choices. This unintended, chilling effect can be eliminated by sequencing the choice process, allowing parents to indicate at the time they are making a magnet school choice that they are also interested in the attendance area school. The city-wide magnet programs can be held out for first consideration in the choice process. Acceptance or rejection at this stage in no way restricts equal opportunity in the second stage for applying to attendance area schools and receiving whatever priority may exist. Finally, it's not unusual to see a third stage in the process, an overall transfer stage, that allows an avenue of redress for any residual school assignment dissatisfaction. Where city-wide and attendance area distinctions do not exist in the magnet school plan, this argument on choice sequencing is moot. However, under other designs where city-wide opportunities are given but attendance area preference systems are also intact, this sequencing allows for an

unfettered opportunity for magnet school application without loss of equal access to attendance area schools.

7. Enrollment Priority Systems

In the process of deciding priorities among the various applicants, one factor, capacity, is always a consideration. Additionally, it is most often the case that magnet schools operate under a racial balance requirement and, therefore, racial balance becomes the second factor limiting enrollment. Aside from these two considerations, the magnet school architect may well consider an array of other priorities in the enrollment process. For example, enrollment from the immediate attendance or former attendance area may be given priority consideration. Another priority factor may be distance. Those students close to the school are given first consideration over those living further away. Another factor that is sometimes considered is called sibling preference. In some programs, brothers and sisters of students already enrolled are given special consideration upon their application. Also, some schools and grade levels are profiled by male and female categories. Some school districts also consider the status of the sending school in considering who has priority for enrollment into a particular program. Occasionally in early childhood programs, the older children are given preference over the younger applicants for the program. Some of these priority categories have in common the fact that if the planning architect chooses to use them, it will have a diminishing effect upon the number of applicants who will receive their choice of assignment. For example, employing the male-female balance criteria will reduce the number of students who can be accepted if the applicants fall outside of the acceptable male-female balance range but stay within the overall capacity limitations of the programs. Other factors are simply extensions of values. For example, the decision to have a sibling preference is valuing multiple child families over single child families. If you are an only child, or if your family has not enrolled siblings in your school of choice, then your chances of being accepted in a program of choice are statistically not as great as those who have siblings in the program. Therefore, the decision to have a sibling pref-

erence policy is a decision in favor of keeping families together at the expense of slightly reducing the chances for families with one child.

The issue of priorities also comes into consideration in the management of a magnet school waiting list. Whatever the district decides is going to be its policy with regard to special priority considerations, that policy needs to be clearly enunciated and repeated in the course of the magnet school enrollment process. If, for example, male-female balance is a part of the consideration, then an individual on the waiting list next in line needs to understand why it is that he or she is being skipped over in favor of someone lower on the list - that it is not a matter of individual prerogative on the part of whoever is administering the system, but rather a result of the priority system.

8. The Role of Enrollment Capping

Capping or discontinuing enrollment into a magnet program can occur at three different stages in the enrollment process as a consequence of the capacity and racial balance goals of the program, as well as the combination of any priority factors that operate. The first point at which the capping of further enrollment becomes a consideration is at the initial point of enrollment decision-making. If, for example, the enrollment period begins in early spring, at some point in late spring a decision is made regarding the students who will be accepted in the program, and then those not accepted are considered for other enrollment opportunities and frequently are placed on a waiting list for their first choice. It's important to note at this stage that any decisions with regard to enrollments are estimated; that is, it is not unusual for the actual fall enrollment to be not precisely equivalent to the spring projections. The practical relevance of this observation is that you can, if you desire, take more students than your capacity or even your racial balance profile would allow if you understand that the patterns of attrition will work in favor of meeting the ultimate goals. These patterns will become evident for each program over time and can be used as a basis for increasing the

number of students accepted in programs without exceeding capacity or violating racial balance goals.

Secondly, at any point in the enrollment process following this initial acceptance, enrollments may be capped when goals are realized. It is not unusual to have vacancies in magnet school programs that exist beyond the initial enrollment point. However, as those initial vacancies are filled by late applicants to the program, there may be some point that is reached when capping is necessary to control the enrollment. Finally, a third stage at which capping might be employed is upon the opening of school and the realization of the actual enrollment. At this stage, decisions can be made about limiting additional enrollment in the program, either because of enrollment capacity, racial balance, or the array of priority factors that have been determined.

The important policy consideration in capping has to do with the analysis of its effects. Obviously, it is desirable to avoid capping if at all possible, so that you are able to grant all the choices for school enrollment. When that is not possible, then it is important to consider the equity effects of the capping decision. That is, the total effect of the capping decision should not disproportionately fall upon one group over another. It is frequently the case that both minority and majority over-subscription exists for a magnet program and a limitation on further enrollment would affect both groups. However, in some circumstances, one group will more disproportionately be affected in order to maintain racial balance requirements for the school. At this point, consideration needs to be given to the overall effect on the entire school system. For example, in the fall of 1985, enrollment in the St. Paul magnet schools resulted in the capping of minority enrollment in five schools and majority enrollment in thirteen schools. However, the duration of the capping was longer for minority students, and the effect overall was equitable for minority and majority students.

These problems can be very severe in cities with large non-white majorities where large numbers of blacks but a much smaller number of whites apply for magnets.

Issues

This paper began with a discussion of the transition in desegregation planning from plans that relied on mandatory reassignment provisions to contemporary plans relying on magnet schools and the choice process. In considering why this transition in planning approaches took place, I suggest that there are at least four major reasons why contemporary school desegregation planning most often makes use of the choice process and magnet schools.

1. Effectiveness

Plans employing the controlled choice process and the use of magnet or specialty programs (within the framework of mandatory goals) have been remarkably successful in meeting the numeric goals of desegregation[6]. For example, beginning in 1977 and for each subsequent year, the Milwaukee Public Schools exceeded the requirements of the court order through their magnet school plan and controlled choice assignment process[7]. Presently, the court's requirement in Milwaukee is that 75% of the students attend racially balanced schools. The school system has maintained for a period well past the expiration of the court order approximately 85% of their students in racially balanced schools. A similar result was realized in the Buffalo school system, when it adopted essentially the same approach that was employed in Milwaukee[8]. More recently, federal district court cases in Yonkers, New York, and San Jose, California, resulted in orders of a magnet school and choice process similar to the design imposed in Milwaukee and Buffalo. Here again, the first year expectations of the court were far exceeded by the results of the district's desegregation efforts.

The success of this approach in meeting court-ordered requirements is attributed to the power exercised in the control of the student assignment process. Traditional desegregation plans employed

remedies that were not easily changed from year to year (example: school district boundaries and grade level reorganizations). The desegregation plan employing choice, however, dynamically controls the reassignment process on a year-to-year basis, giving much better leverage on the desegregation goals. This precise control contributes to a second important virtue of this approach to desegregation -- stability.

2. Stability

The desegregation process employing choice and magnet schools has resulted in an amazingly stable situation with regard to the maintenance of the desegregation effort. With traditional desegregation plans it was frequently the case that schools brought into racial balance suffered the loss of that balance over time, as a consequence of enrollment changes that could not be adequately responded to with traditional desegregation techniques. By contrast, the choice process, which exercises yearly control in the student reassignment process, could be expected to make the fine tuning adjustments necessary on a year-to-year basis to maintain racial balance in already racially-balanced schools. Schools originally racially balanced in Milwaukee in 1977 remain in racial balance in 1987, despite a 23% increase in minority students during the time period.

3. Educational Improvement

An important and clearly intended by-product of the desegregation process which relies on magnet schools and the choice process is the overall improvement in the school system's programs. In other words, the net quality of educational offerings in the school system may be appreciably increased at the same time the district is complying with desegregation requirements[9]. In addition to the improvement of quality, there's greater variety of educational offerings as a consequence of the adoption of this approach, as well as a more equitable access to these programs of choice. All of this goes a long way toward relieving the public impression of desegregation as a punitive enterprise and replacing it with a reality of desegregation as an outstanding opportunity for access to improved educa-

tional opportunities in the school system. Traditional desegregation planning makes no special efforts to do anything but meet the required numerical standard of student and staff assignments. By contrast, the system employing magnet school programs and specializations is able to awaken students, staffs, and parents to the possibilities of greater personal opportunity for them and maintain their interest and support for the public school system.

4. Choice

The contribution of the choice aspect of this desegregation process cannot be over-estimated. The presumption is that students and staff who make conscious choices with regard to what school they will be in also make a commitment to public schooling that mimics the emotion underlying the choice of a private school.

Making a choice is not a guarantee that it will be granted. In this respect, it's important to make the distinction between the choice process and the "freedom of choice" or totally voluntary plans that were offered by some southern school districts shortly after the Brown decision. The choice process allows the district and, for that matter, parents, students, and staff, to have the opportunity to exhaust whatever potential there is for voluntary compliance with the order or requirement. In other words, there is a conscious matching of choices with requirements and an effort to grant as many first choices as possible within the constraints of the requirement. In this matching, the choice process has been remarkably successful. For example, in Milwaukee, in 1977 when approximately 108,000 students were assigned schools under the desegregation plan ordered by the federal district court, better than 95% of the first choices that parents made for school assignment were granted, while at the same time meeting the racial balance requirements of the court[10]. Other districts employing this choice process have had similar experience, even when school closings were not part of the process as was the case in Milwaukee. By contrast, when traditional desegregation mandatory reassignment provisions are used, such as redistricting, pairing and clustering, they do not take advantage of what-

ever voluntary movement might have furthered the district in pursuit of the desegregation goals. Despite the virtues of the magnet school and choice process that are espoused by advocates and conceded by critics, there remain predictable issues and criticisms of the magnet school and choice approach that need to be considered and addressed.

1. Elitism

Magnet schools are represented to the public as alternatives but with an implied superiority[11]. The accusation is frequently made that magnet schools can be established in a school system in such a way as to create a haven for those already served well in the traditional educational program. Racial isolation may be replaced by socio-economic isolation. This criticism goes on to assert that the individuals injured in the course of the school system's history of segregation are not the primary beneficiaries of the plan where magnet school and specialty programs are designed to appeal exclusively to the academically gifted or where programs can be accessed only through rigorous entrance requirements. Under these circumstances, the charge of elitism is frequently valid.

By contrast, a magnet school design can intentionally be inclusive, both from a standpoint of offering a wide range of programs intended for a broad range of students' interests and abilities, as well as minimizing the number of programs which require the student to meet entrance requirements[12 13]. Under these circumstances, the magnet programs excite the interest and enrollment of students from a wide range of interests and abilities and contribute to a more egalitarian goal.

Without question, and regardless of the design of the program, there are certain parents in any community who are simply better prepared to take advantage of the choice process. This particular unfair advantage is exacerbated by a student enrollment process that insists on a first-come, first-served approach as opposed to a deadline approach (as discussed earlier in this paper). It should also be

noted that in the maturation of the magnet school and choice process, some of the initial problems of awareness are overcome. In other words, in the third, fourth, and fifth year of magnet school operation, the community as a whole becomes better informed of the opportunities available and, hence, the access to the range of schools is more equitable.

Recruitment methods that feature information centers, advertisements in the minority press, the cooperation of churches, and targeted efforts by schools can increase the minority representation in magnet programs.

A twist or variation on the criticism of elitism is the accusation that magnet schools set in motion opportunities for favoritism and a generally unfair approach to student assignment. It may be alleged that the sons and daughters of important community adults, or the children of school system personnel are served above others. The appearance of favoritism can be as damning as the reality. Generally speaking, the best approach to eliminating or reducing community skepticism and assuring the essential fairness of the assignment process is to render that process as public as possible. By this I mean, the mechanics of the assignment process need to be represented ahead of time to the public and then actually conducted in a very public manner. Here again, the first-come, first-served approach does not lend itself to easy public understanding or public monitoring of the assignment process. The first-come, first-served approach tends to reinforce the suspicions that certain important people in the community are served unfairly ahead of others, whether or not this is true.

It is often the issue of waiting lists and how waiting lists are handled that become a matter of considerable contentiousness in regard to magnet school enrollment. Some districts have decided to not operate with waiting lists. Students are accepted in the program in the fall of the year, and the programs are essentially closed for further enrollment until the enrollment processes are reviewed the

following year. Most districts, however, that employ the magnet school approach have chosen to maintain an active waiting list from the initial pool of applicants, allowing those applicants to access the program during the year as spaces become available. The next issue they face is whether or not the waiting list will be continued and carried over to the following year. Some districts choose to disregard the waiting list at the end of the school year and begin the enrollment process anew the following year with those having made application in the first year being required to renew that application. Other districts have chosen to carry over the waiting list as a convenience for parents who are still interested in the program. Carrying over the waiting list usually results in the enrollment of the waiting list carryovers ahead of new applicants for the program. This information is well received by parents of children on the waiting list and not well received by those who are making new application to the program. Whether or not the district employs a waiting list and how it determines priorities for the waiting list (for example: Will siblings be taken ahead of others even though they are not next in line on the waiting list?) is an essential value question for careful consideration by the school district. There are few clear right or wrong decisions with regard to the administration of waiting lists (unless the administration results in failure to racially balance a school), but in each case the decision of the management of waiting lists should be carefully thought through and then managed in a very honest and public way so that there is not the potential appearance, much less reality, of abuse in their management.

Some special comment needs to be reserved for the philosophy of eligibility with regard to gifted and talented magnet programs. One of the most common magnet school programs used by school districts is one designed for gifted and talented students. This program has had remarkable success in attracting a relatively large number of students and has also proven to be a program that is a powerful means of changing the racial balance of a particular school. The gifted and talented program is also a frequent target of the

elitism critics. The very existence of this kind of magnet program is repugnant to some, particularly those who believe that the appropriate model for gifted and talented education should be that the program be located in each of the schools of the system rather than centering in a single school. When districts operate in such a way as to create gifted and talented education exclusively in a single site, it is indeed contributing to the validity of an elitist criticism. By contrast, many urban school districts operate gifted and talented programs in a single site while at the same time truly supporting the development of programs in all of the schools capable of serving the needs of gifted and talented students such that there is a viable choice for the parents of gifted and talented students between the center and the local school.

However, the major focus of the elitist criticism has to do with the eligibility requirements for the gifted and talented program. The design of a gifted and talented program can intentionally focus exclusively on academic performance or, alternately, can be intentionally designed to identify a wider range of gifted and talented performance, including areas other than academic performance. Taking the latter approach will create a more diverse pool of individuals both from a talent and ethnic standpoint. The second issue arises with regard to the selection process. Some districts have operated in such a way as to rank order all of the students on some gifted and talented scale, either a single academic scale or multiple scales. This rank order then becomes the basis for selection of students, from presumably the most gifted of the group down the list until the capacity of the program is filled within racial balance requirements. The problems associated with this approach are numerous. First, it suffers from hyperrationality, that is, the tendency to believe that the measures employed to identify gifted and talented behavior can separate the performance of those students in such a discrete fashion that lends itself to this kind of interval ranking. At best, the measures frequently employed are capable of creating ordinal kinds of classifications, that is, to separate the qualified from the un-

qualified. Therefore, the psychometric argument on behalf of this rank ordering cannot be sustained.

However, I think the fundamental problem with some approaches to classifying gifted and talented students is that the sponsors of the program feel that gifted and talented behavior is more due to nurture than nature. In fact, increased evidence suggests that gifted and talented behavior can be taught and that we ought to design the eligibility criteria for programs to serve the needs of gifted and talented students in such a way that we intentionally have a mix of students with different kinds of talents. This suggests a preference for designing the acceptance of students into a gifted and talented program along lines of an eligibility pool where once it is determined that the students are eligible for the program, all other rank ordering classification becomes irrelevant. Then a random selection process is employed to take students from this eligibility pool. On this point some criticize this approach because "the most talented" student may not be fortunate enough to be drawn in the random sample. However, if the system truly believes that gifted and talented students are served not only in a gifted and talented center but in all schools, this student has lost access to only one of a number of appropriate choices. Moreover, the remaining students on this waiting list can be carried over to the next year without problem in comparing them to the new applicants for the program; since they were equally qualified to enter the program previously, the assumption of their qualification prevails into the second year.

The elitism accusation ought to be considered in the competing contexts - that is, to examine if elitism exists in a neighborhood school assignment plan, or in a mandatory reassignment plan. Most would readily concede that to the extent there are patterns of economic residential isolation, there will be elitism in neighborhood schools in a community. Less apparent is the problem with avoidance in mandatory reassignment plans that destroys efforts at reducing elitism. Carefully designed choice programs can retain students who otherwise would avoid mandatory reassignment and

create socio-economic balance that improves on neighborhood school results.

In conclusion, the dropping of entrance requirements, the creation of magnets of wide interest, the use of the deadline approach, and the maturation of the process over time all work to significantly reduce, if not totally eliminate, the criticism of elitism in the magnet school and choice process approach to desegregation.

2. Skimming

The term skimming refers to the fear that within the total school system, certain schools, notably the popular magnet programs, will pull or skim the most talented students from other schools in the system, rendering the non-magnet schools as places without the necessary constituency to be successful[14]. In particular, the criticism is sometimes heard that magnet schools have attracted all the "student leaders" out of schools where otherwise they would have had greater opportunities to lead, and, secondly, where those leadership skills were badly needed.

Any thorough examination of the criticism of skimming needs to begin by dismissing an early assumption. It is too often the assumption that students who are in magnet schools would otherwise be in the non-magnet schools of the public school system. Experience would suggest that this is frequently not the case. For example, when the previous school of attendance was determined for a sample of twenty-five minority students attending an attractive high school magnet program in Milwaukee, only four of the students were previously enrolled in the public school system of the district. The balance attended either private schools or were otherwise new students to the district. It is suggested that magnet schools are drawing not only from the population who might have attended area schools in the public system, but also from a population that otherwise would not have been part of the public school system at all. This suggests an important area that has not been researched; that is, determining the extent to which the whole of the magnet enroll-

ment is greater than the sum of its parts. Magnets draw some students who were at one point actually enrolled in private schools and were attracted into public schools. More often they hold students who would be in private education or whose parents would have made another residential choice to be in another public school system were it not for the availability of attractive magnet school programs.

This effect is strongly suggested by an examination of a school system that initially opened a single alternative school. In 1972 the Milwaukee Public Schools opened an alternative middle school "open education" program. All of those in the system were surprised when three thousand application forms arrived for a school that was targeted to open with four hundred students. Teachers of the students who were chosen for enrollment in the program commented that these students and their parents had no idea of what "open education" was but rather the parents were providing escape for their children from the traditional junior high program in the district.

Beginning in 1976, minority students were provided the opportunity under a new provision of Wisconsin law to transfer from Milwaukee to cooperating suburban school districts on a voluntary basis. In examining the background of applicants for transfer at the 9th grade level to a popular suburban high school, it was noted that most of the names were not on the public school data file (of fifteen students, only three were on the data file as attending a public school). These private school students were on paper enrolled in the public school system over the summer in order to qualify for eligibility to enroll in the suburban school system. At least with respect to this group, it would be ludicrous to argue skimming, or a "brain drain" on the urban public school system from the loss of these students, since literally they were not in the system to begin with. The options brought them into public education.

There is not yet proof that magnet schools attract a large segment of enrollment that otherwise would not be in the public schools.

This is an important researchable question. Such research, carefully conducted, might answer whether this phenomenon is an insignificant anomaly or a significant factor in the enrollment of magnet schools.

However, in assuming that some students, including talented students, are enrolled in magnet schools in lieu of attendance in a public non-magnet school, the effects of this redistribution can be minimized by some of the same factors that were introduced earlier in response to the elitism challenge. In other words, if there is a significant distribution of magnet programs without entrance criteria and with a program intentionally designed to be diverse and attractive to a wide range of students, the magnet school programs are developed with student body profiles more alike than different from the traditional non-magnet school student profile. In the case of high schools, some districts have consciously designed specializations so that literally all of the high schools in the city participate in the magnet school process. Also, it may be the case that attendance area schools are inspired to make themselves and their programs more attractive in the environment of competition with attractive magnet school programs, such that there is a genuine feeling that all who are in the school system boat rise on the tide of improvement.

3. Burden

A third argument cited in criticism of magnet school and choice programs is the belief that a disproportionate burden of desegregation responsibility is placed on minority students and parents[15].

Without question, the institution of the choice process in desegregation planning results in a very different pattern of choice on the part of various ethnic groups. While not taking the time here to develop this analysis in detail, the generalizations that can be safely drawn are that whites and Hispanics tend disproportionately to choose their attendance area school for enrollment purposes, while blacks have a much greater propensity for choosing to attend schools

other than their predominantly black attendance area school. For example, in Milwaukee, looking over a long period of time at the choice patterns, black parents were nine times more likely to choose a school other than their neighborhood school than were white or Hispanic parents. Therefore, if all of these first choices were granted, it would have had the inevitable effect of reassigning, by virtue of the choices their parents made, many more black students to predominantly white schools than the reverse. Those without background and knowledge of this persistent propensity conclude, erroneously, that the differential in assignment based on this choice is an example of burden visited on the victims of the previous segregation. Also, it is the case that some spokespersons who are not sympathetic to the goals of school desegregation, as well as others who prefer alternative means of desegregation, have intentionally misrepresented this circumstance and turned it to their own advantage[16].

It is a fair expectation of a school district's implementation of the desegregation plan that the district equitably balance the "true desegregation burden." The "true desegregation burden" in a choice process is the assignment of students to schools other than those chosen as a first choice by their parents. In other words, the mandatory back-up provisions of a controlled choice assignment process, where the school district must make the decision on assignment because the parents' request cannot be accommodated, ought to be implemented equitably. With regard to the likely impact of this approach, the research of Professor Christine Rossell is insightful[17]. In summary, she concludes that the mandatory reassignment of whites will predictably result in significant avoidance (flight) from the system and a reduction of the system's total amount of interracial exposure. The best public policy, however, in my view, requires the equal distribution of burden despite the consequence. My "best public policy" recommendation makes practical sense only in an environment where the vast majority of school assignment is a result of granting parents their first choice.

In this environment the avoidance by both majority and minority parents of mandatory assignment is minimal.

Desegregation plans using magnet schools and the choice process suffer the criticism of their success. Unfortunately, our country has been inured to the view of desegregation as calamity. This is reinforced in tabloids depicting the violent resistance to desegregation orders. In reality, of course, most desegregation has ultimately proceeded peacefully in most communities[18]. In particular, the magnet school/choice process plans have enjoyed a high degree of public acceptance.

While choice plans can be engineered to reduce most of the legitimate criticisms of such plans, there will remain problems not solved by any choice plan, irrespective of its quality. Not everyone holds the same definition of equity, so manipulation of the plan to solve one definition may do injury to another. Moreover, most of this discussion has centered on the "equal access" side of equity, not the "equal result" side. This is by necessity. Choice is, after all, fundamentally an access issue, not result issue. Other efforts of the school system, such as the "effective schools" designs are more appropriately viewed as attacking equity from the results side. We don't burden the "effective schools" strategy with the obligation of access equity (desegregation), and we would unfairly burden the choice strategy by asking it to solve all the results problem. Fortunately, our policy decision does not require the selection of one strategy over another, but allows, and I would argue, requires the employment of both.

In the realm of social policy, good people frequently disagree. There is probably no arena of school policy more fraught with differing opinion and emotion than school desegregation. Anyone involved in the architecture of desegregation plans is inevitably subject to criticism from the left, right, and all political points inbetween. Accusations of social engineering, racism, and burden are common epithets hurled at most desegregation planners at one time or

another. It becomes the task of the desegregation architects to understand the law, science, and art of desegregation planning to fashion the plans best suited to local circumstance. In that pursuit, the community can be true participants in the desegregation planning process[19]. The community can be the best source of ideas and responses to magnet program concepts. They can work side by side with school staffs in the creation of better programs to serve children. This very intimate partnership in the desegregation planning between school staff and the community is typical of plans which rely on the magnet school and choice process[20].

Choice from the State Perspective

This discussion of some of the major issues faced in the design of controlled choice program I hope suggests very clearly that the wholesale endorsement of choice, or, for that matter, its repudiation, is dangerous. Both advocates and critics need to be sensitive to the specific design components of the choice program being talked about before reasonable criticism can be offered. Consequently, as we look more broadly at the choice issue across the country, we need to consider some of the problems associated with choice designs considered for adoption, not just on a local district level or even on a metropolitan level, but for states as a whole.

Charles Kerchner, in an article appearing in the "Educational Administration Quarterly," metaphorically described the coming leadership era as one of a period of choice[21]. Choice in all of its fullness -its virtues, faults, confusions, and contradictions- will be the dominant theme in education in the early 1990s. Consequently, governors and state legislators and those responsible for defining educational policy at the state level will increasingly turn their attention to plans that stimulate parent and student choice on a state-wide basis. Much attention has already focused on Minnesota, where a state-wide choice initiative has been in effect for two years. To date, the Minnesota choice initiative is more notable for what it may adumbrate for our future than the present impact of the plan. Fewer than 500 students out of over 700,000 students in the public school

systems of Minnesota presently participate in the choice process. This number does not include students who transfer to other school systems under inter-district agreements pre-dating open enrollment (13,000 students)[22].

The open enrollment legislation in Minnesota allows parents to access any public school in the state with no district being allowed to prevent a parent from leaving the district. Individual school districts may vote to close their doors to all incoming students. Moreover, the urban school districts undergoing desegregation are able to exercise individual control over student movement in and out of the district according to racial balance requirements. In addition to this option, parents of 11th and 12th graders in Minnesota may access post-secondary institutions and have their children gain both high school and post-secondary credit in that process. As with open enrollment, the state aid follows the student. Finally, designated students at risk can access private, non-sectarian schools at the discretion of the individual school districts who determine they cannot provide an adequate alternative program within the school district for the child. While it is much too early to assess what are likely to be the full implementation characteristics of Minnesota's various choice statutes, already it is apparent that certain issues and factors need further attention, so that the vision of choice can be more fully realized.

First, there is the issue of information about the various Minnesota option programs. Very little thought and no money was established in the enactment of these various choice alternatives to make sure that information about the programs was made available to all parents. Consequently, the already over-taxed information offices of state government are expected to bear the additional burden of informing parents about the choice programs. Moreover, no additional funding was provided school districts to accommodate this need; and, consequently, districts have not chosen to invest their scarce resources in this marketing effort. A very special problem exists with the more difficult to reach parents. The normal coverage of

choice options in the general media does not penetrate necessarily to all parents. Consequently, some parents are simply left out of the information mainstream and, hence, left without equal access to the various choice programs. Lack of information at all levels probably accounts at this stage as the biggest single factor that constrains parent participation in the program.

There is also a potential abuse available under Minnesota law with regard to the ability of an individual school district to prevent students from transferring into the school district. To date, only one district in Minnesota, Edina, reputedly the wealthiest school district in the state, has chosen to close its doors to incoming students. This escape clause is an unfortunate inclusion in the Minnesota Open Enrollment Law and other states ought to be advised that this provision should be carefully inspected before adopted. While Edina has argued that race was not a factor in its decision to close its doors, Edina's proximity to Minneapolis and a large minority community did not go unnoticed by Minnesota media commenting on Edina's decision.

Another chilling effect on the choice options is the lack of transportation. Except in extreme cases of poverty, parents are expected to provide their own transportation.

Because open enrollment transfers state aid, but not the entire cost of educating a child to the receiving district, the receiving district as well as the losing district both financially suffer. Moreover, the additional financial burden associated with the administration of this program is not defrayed by the state. Without some attention to these economic disincentives, it is likely that most Minnesota school districts will administer this program with, at best, lukewarm efforts.

Another curious omission in the Minnesota open enrollment program is the fact the state access guarantee does not apply to parents seeking alternative public schools within a school district. In other words, while parents are free to transfer from one school district to

another under Minnesota law, they are not free to transfer to another school within their own district. While a number of districts voluntarily extend this option to students and parents, most school districts do not, creating the ironic situation that it is easier to get into another school district than it is to another school, other than your attendance area school, in your own district.

Minnesota and other states also need to inspect very carefully the racial balance implications of the open enrollment policy. Formerly, states many times attempted to wash their hands of issues involving racial isolation, both within a school district and across school district lines, by arguing that racial balance outcomes were the product of racially neutral decisions by the state in creating school districts and then, more directly, the results of the student assignment systems employed by school districts. However, under open enrollment, the state takes a much more direct responsibility for the ultimate student assignment outcomes, implicating the state in Fourteenth Amendment issues when that outcome exacerbates the existing conditions of racial imbalance or fails to improve them. Of particular importance to states ought to be the direct implications that an open enrollment plan has for metropolitan desegregation. At the very least, an open enrollment plan should do no further injury to conditions of racial isolation on a metropolitan basis. However, states may wish to provide special enhancements to the open enrollment plan that favors transfers that have a racially improving effect on schools. This kind of approach has been suggested as a modification to the existing open enrollment program in Minnesota[23].

Wherever plans are discussed, the issue of its impact on inter-scholastic athletics is predictably a part of the debate. As a matter of fact, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that in most places, the debate on inter-scholastic athletic programs as they are affected by open enrollment plans becomes the single most heated and visible issue. The fear expressed by some is that the balance in the inter-scholastic athletic programs among teams would be destroyed by rampant recruiting of prize athletes by coaches and

school officials. It is argued by critics of open enrollment that athletic programs become the principal reason parents and students choose specific schools. One Minnesota superintendent recently claimed that the failure of a student to be successful on a hockey team to which that student transferred led to the student's committing suicide.

This argument needs to be examined at its base. First, one would have to question the premise. Is there balance or parity presently among teams based on non-recruiting and geography determining where students attend school? The fact is that there are and will remain vast differences among high school athletic teams based on their being blessed with athletes, all of whom live and play together in neighborhoods. As a matter of fact, the recruiting of players from these neighborhoods would probably do more to stimulate better competitive balance than would the continued relationship of teams to neighborhoods.

The examination of existing choice programs reveals that the fears of athletic imbalance are more apparent than real. Moreover, the amount of recruitment that goes on is limited and its effect may be more positive in creating athletic balance than the traditional relationship of students attending their neighborhood schools. Finally, the inter-scholastic argument becomes another one of the red herrings thrown up by school officials as an example of the poor decision-making that parents are capable of making with regard to school choice. The solution offered by some school officials is to require parents make a successful argument to school officials before choice is allowed. This is a dangerous presumption on the part of administrators, and State policy makers ought to appreciate the underlying arrogance of the argument.

Another issue with regard to choice at the State level is whether or not choice is in fact a stalking horse for school district reorganization. It is well recognized that State officials have more often fled from the issue of school district reorganization than faced it head

on as a matter of important State policy. No doubt, some legislators will see choice as a back door approach to school district consolidation. As this theory goes, students will transfer out of a particular district in such numbers as to move the critical mass of students well below the capacity of a school district to operate, thus causing capitulation to reorganization by the shrunken school district. In fact, this scenario is very unlikely to occur. School districts show an amazing capacity to retain their schools and programs regardless of enrollment decline. In fact, enrollment decline experienced in the last few years by most school districts throughout the United States is cataclysmic compared to the enrollment decline caused by open enrollment. Despite the reduction in student enrollment due to birthrate, school districts have managed to keep their doors open and resist the consolidation effort. School choice does create a very difficult situation from a state policy standpoint - defending choice and competition among districts, but, at the same time, supporting school districts, many of whom do not have the critical mass of students necessary to compete on an even playing field. Choice will probably serve the purpose of highlighting this inequity and putting more pressure on state legislatures to face up squarely to the important issue of school district consolidation. School district consolidation is the single most important reform that can be exacted at the state level that has an effect on both the effectiveness and the economics of the operation of public schools within a state. States ought to be about the task of facing up to their school district consolidation needs directly and responsibly.

Another stalking horse fear is that public school choice is the first step toward vouchers. The case for separating public school choice from private voucher is eloquently made by Mary Anne Raywid in her article, "Public Choice, Yes; Vouchers, No!"[24]. John Coons and others make the case for private school inclusion in the choice process[25]. While as a public school administrator, the reader would not be surprised to learn that I agree with Raywid and disagree with Coons, the point in raising this matter is not to justify one opinion over another, but to argue that it is important to convince state

legislators not to use the fear of the voucher controversy as an excuse for failing to take up the choice issue.

State policymakers considering the inclusion of private schools in the choice program can expect a full debate from advocates and critics. At one time, private schools had the corner on the alternative school market. Indeed, most private schools grew up as either a religious or program alternative to mainstream public education. As mainstream public education diversifies, it represents a direct and immediate challenge to the continued existence of private schools. Little wonder that a parent would have an interest in having a child in a public school Montessori program rather than a private one where parents are expected to pay tuition. While private schools will continue to hold some market share, that market will likely decline in the 1990s if public schools offer more choice and more variety.

While the free market metaphor in school choice is often used as an argument on behalf of the reform effect of school choice, in fact, there is reason to believe that choice will probably spawn more cooperation than competition. To the extent that the open enrollment and choice process engenders the creation of more schools of choice, that is, schools with alternative modes of instruction and emphasis on particular content, these schools will create their own niche in terms of clientele. In fact, they will not compete with one another so much as they will network, particularly across programs of common interest. Therefore, a creative arts elementary school in Milwaukee may collaborate with a newer program being developed in St. Paul for the mutual benefit of both programs. In the meantime, there will exist a sense of healthy competition, which, in effect, says that if a particular school or school district cannot offer attractive and varied programs, parents will move to better opportunities. There is also an apparent increase in competition between public and private schools.

Another factor needing attention by the state is whether or not the open enrollment program will give equal priority to the school enrollment to incoming transferring students or retain first priority with resident students. It is unlikely in most states that open enrollment would be successful if those seeking transfer into a school outside the district were given the same priority as resident students. In Minnesota and most other states, priority for enrollment is retained for resident students of the district and then opportunities for transfer students are on a space-available basis. With regard to this, the state will need to monitor declarations of over-crowding to be sure that, in fact, schools are not sabotaging open enrollment by declaring schools full that still have capacity.

Plans like the open enrollment program in Minnesota challenge our conventional wisdom about schools. We are asked now to understand that the schools are a resource to all the children in the state, not just those circumscribed by boundaries on a map. Further, we are asked to think of ourselves in competition with one another with the best schools and the best programs being the winners in terms of maintaining or increasing student enrollment and financial support. At the same time, new forms of cooperation will come to exist as districts and schools combine efforts to define themselves uniquely and appeal to a particular segment of the education market. While the proponents of choice, and I consider myself one of them, tout its potential virtues, it is important to remember that it is not going to be education's silver bullet. As a matter of fact, it is easy to imagine, cynically, the public official viewing public schools badly in need of additional resource to repair and replace the physical infrastructure of the school system, to be more competitive with teachers' salaries, and needing an upgraded technology, being offered choice instead. Choice is no substitute for making the necessary investment in public education. Choice can be an important complement to that investment.

[1] "Views on Choice," Education Week, Vol. VIII, No. 25, March 8, 1989.

[2] Diane Divoky, "Reflections on Twenty Years of Alternatives," in Nathan ed. Public Schools By Choice, The Institute for Learning and Teaching, St. Paul, Mn., 1989.

[3] Mary Anne Raywid, "The Mounting Case for Schools of Choice," in Nathan ed. Public Schools By Choice, The Institute for Learning and Teaching, St. Paul, Mn., 1989.

[4] David A. Bennett, "Magnet School Desegregation Plans: Elements of the Architecture," National Conference on School Desegregation Policy, Nov. 14, 1986, Washington, D.C. (unpublished).

[5] This section on Organizing Principals of the Choice Process originally appeared in "Magnet School Desegregation Plans: Elements of the Architecture," David A. Bennett, National Conference on School Desegreation Policy, Nov. 14, 1986, Washington, D.C., (unpublished).

[6] Cheryl Stanley, "Magnet Schools: Eighth and Ninth Annual Reports," 1983 and 1984, Unpublished evaluation reports of the Houston Independent School District.

[7] David A. Bennett, "A Plan for Increasing Educational Opportunities and Improving Racial Balance in Milwaukee," in Willie ed School Desegregation Plans That Work, Greenwood Press, pp. 51-74.

[8] James Traud, "Magnet Schools: Busing Without Tears," The New Republic, Nov. 1983, pp. 18-20.

[9] Rolf K. Blank, "The Effects of Magnet Schools on the Quality of Education in Urban School Districts," Phi Delta Kappan, 1984, pp. 270-272.

[10] Op. Cit. Bennett, School, Desegregation Plans That Work.

[11] Mary Haywood Metz, "The Life Course of Magnet Schools," The Education Digest, 1984 (Dec.), pp. 20-23.

[12] Op. Cit. Blank

[13] Dennis P. Doyle and Marsha Levine, "Magnet Schools: Choice and Quality in Public Education," Phi Delta Kappan, 1984 (Dec.), pp. 265-269.

[14] Vito Perrone, "Educational Equity," Insights into Open Education, Vol. 17, No. 8, p. 9

[15] Guilbert C. Hentschke, W. T. Lowe, E. C. Royster, "School Desegregation Policy for the Next Thirty Years," Urban Education, Vol. 20, No. 2, July 1985, pp. 149-175.

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24 Mary Anne Raywid, "Public Choice, Yes; Vouchers, No!", Phi Delta Kappan, June, 1987.

25 John Coons, "Suit Seeks Using Private Schools for Integration," Education USA, Vol. 31, No. 48, July 31, 1989, pp. 343 & 345.

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